

Rollins College

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Rollins Magazine

Marketing and Communications

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Fall 2019

### Rollins Magazine, Fall 2019

Rollins College Office of Marketing and Communications

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# Reins

FALL 2019



*the* **King** of  
**Kindness**





## PACKED WITH CARE

Business management major and Army veteran Andrew Boyd '21 spent this past summer interning at Feeding Children Everywhere, an Orlando-based nonprofit dedicated to creating a hunger-free world. He credits the experience for his newfound knowledge of supply chain operations and for the chance to put business concepts he has learned in class into action. Whether he was updating inventories or overseeing logistics at large-scale events like the Hunger Project—where he packed goods alongside Orlando City players during MLS All-Star Week—Boyd honed skills in task management, problem solving, and system analysis that will give him an edge when he applies to graduate programs in applied intelligence.





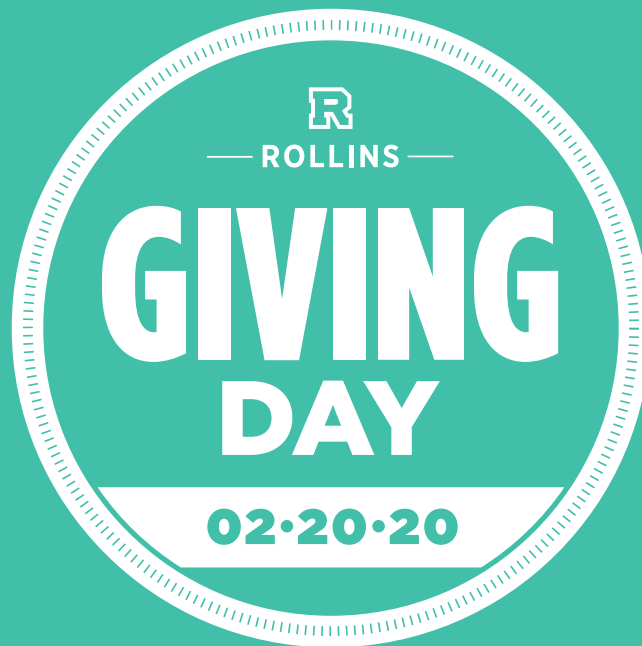
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EVERYWHERE





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# Rollins

FALL 2019



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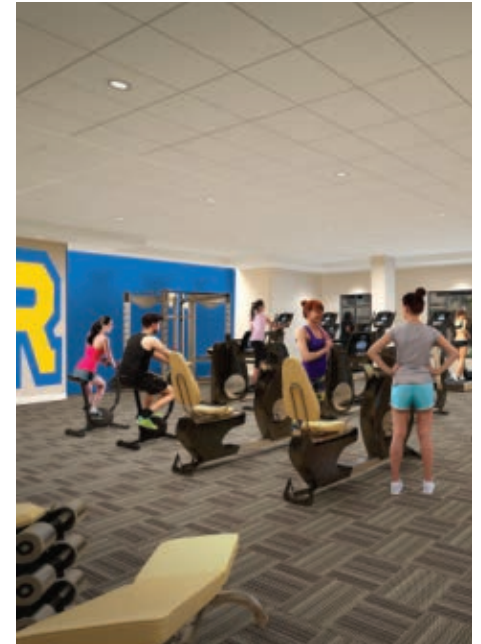
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### LAKESIDE NEIGHBORHOOD

Like Fred Rogers' '51 '74H's iconic Neighborhood of Make-Believe, the new 250,000-square-foot residential community taking shape along the southeastern shoreline of campus is designed to facilitate relational learning and support the health and well-being of its residents.



# Making Mister Rogers Proud

At the end of the final episode of *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*, the last thing Fred Rogers '51 '74H does before swapping shoes and hanging up his sweater for the last time is to sing "I'm Proud of You." The song is quintessential Fred—a simple yet powerful reminder that he cares for and values each and every one of us.

Over the past few months, as we've pored over hundreds of anecdotes for "The King of Kindness," we consistently drew parallels between Fred's singular ethos and Rollins' unique approach to liberal arts education. With *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood* set for release later this fall, we sat down with President Grant Cornwell to explore the many ways the visions of Fred Rogers and his alma mater converge. The verdict: Nearly two decades after that last episode aired, we think Fred would be proud of the work that's happening in our neighborhood.

**Q: One of the things that stands out about Fred is the importance he placed on relationships. The new film is based on a magazine profile that spawned an unlikely, years-long friendship between Fred and *Esquire* writer Tom Junod, and we've heard so many stories about the tremendous energy Fred put into forming real relationships with virtually everyone he met. At Rollins, relational learning is at the heart of everything we do. Our approaches are similar to say the least.**

**A:** One could talk about a Mister Rogers ethic. Fred Rogers didn't espouse a philosophy as much as he demonstrated one not only through his show but also in the way he lived. Most people would identify Fred as a television personality, a musician, and a writer, but he was also a truly great teacher. What you will notice throughout his life and show is a premise that deep learning happens in the context of human relationships. It requires listening. It requires personal

connection. And it requires compassion. This accurately describes the teaching and learning culture of Rollins. The intimate and personalized learning environment that shaped Fred as a student in the '40s and '50s is thriving throughout our campus today, and we're constantly identifying and investing in ways to strengthen our human-powered approach to education. It's why students choose to study here and why they cherish their time here.

**Q: Can you talk about some of the ways Rollins continues to foster and invest in relational learning?**

**A:** There is a great deal of change underway at Rollins right now. Ironically, everything that is new is a recommitment to our core values and beliefs about the nature of liberal education. We are investing in the relationships through which all learning happens at Rollins. The new Kathleen W. Rollins Hall will be a hub of relational learning, empowering students to integrate all of the elements of their education and make meaning of their Rollins experience, mentored every step of the way by caring faculty and student-life educators. And Lakeside Neighborhood will enable more students to soak up the richness of living and learning in community with their peers.

**Q: Fred was inspired by the Life is for Service plaque in Strong Hall. What do you think he would think about the College's service-learning commitment?**

**A:** Fred was proud of Rollins, and I think

he would be even more proud today. We are national leaders in civic engagement and in providing opportunities for our students to put their education to work in the world, always with a focus on improving the lives of others. Examples abound. Over the past 14 years, nearly 10,000 Tars have contributed more than 40,000 hours of service during SPARC Day. For six of the past seven years, Rollins has ranked No. 1 in the nation for percentage of students who participate in alternative breaks. And just last year, Florida Campus Compact named Rollins the Most Engaged Campus of 2018.

**Q: There will only be one Fred Rogers, but every year Rollins sends out into the world hundreds of graduates who have been steeped in his ethos through their time here. Given the current climate of national discourse and the challenges facing the world, our mission to educate global citizens and responsible leaders like Fred feels more critical than ever.**

**A:** The norms of public discourse seem to condone—sometimes even celebrate—nastiness, aggressive disrespect, and rhetorics of anger. This could not be more anathema to Fred Rogers. He understood that kindness and gentle respect are much more powerful tools for conveying important ideas and values than noisy declarations, and I think that's why we're experiencing this tidal wave of renewed appreciation for Mister Rogers. The world needs Fred Rogers and Rollins graduates like him more than ever.

## ON CAMPUS



### March 20

The second iteration of Rollins' Career Champions mentorship program wrapped up this past spring, raising the bar even higher by adding more student-alumni pairs, more diversity, and more networking events.



### April 24

Campus events like the spring wellness fair are just one of the many ways Tars live their best #RollinsLife on America's most beautiful campus.

### May 21

Lauren Neldner '20 is the latest Tar to earn a Goldwater Scholarship, the preeminent undergraduate award in the fields of mathematics, engineering, and the natural sciences. The physics major plans to pursue a PhD in either geophysics or structural engineering, with a focus on seismology.







## July 30

Abbey Glover '21 worked alongside biology professor Pamela Brannock to perform genetic analysis on apple snails in Florida with the goal of aiding in the control of the invasive mollusks. The pair has already received permits to collect more samples in several state parks around Florida and is gearing up to present their findings at the Society for Integrated and Comparative Biology in January.

## August 24

Rollins' annual SPARC Day once again offered first-year students a glimpse into the importance of service as a foundational component of a meaningful life and productive career.



## August 25

First-year students celebrated the beginning of their educational journey at Rollins during the annual time-honored tradition of Candlewish, where they raise candles to symbolize the power of community and the pursuit of knowledge.



## July 31

President Grant Cornwell and board of trustees member Alan Ginsburg were among those present for the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new Rollins Garage. The new four-story garage relieves parking pressure on campus by adding 733 spaces and improves the pathways from the east side of campus.





## 20 Years Strong

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Rollins' Student-Faculty Collaborative Scholarship Program. To celebrate this milestone, we look back at 20 of the program's most significant accomplishments—from published books and groundbreaking acoustical research to career-launching opportunities and prestigious graduate programs.

[rollins.college/sfcsp](https://rollins.college/sfcsp)



## Summer, Shared

From growing oyster gardens in upstate New York to advocating for human rights with a global nonprofit in the Middle East, explore our students' top achievements from summer 2019.

[rollins.college/summer-shared](https://rollins.college/summer-shared)

## Changemakers in Action

For the second consecutive year, Rollins is among an exclusive group of colleges selected to participate in the Millennium Fellowship, a prestigious leadership development program that challenges students to address the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

[rollins.college/millennium-fellowship](https://rollins.college/millennium-fellowship)



## Secret Code

Success in today's high-tech workforce requires more than expert coding chops. Just ask Rollins' 2018 computer science grads, whose 21st-century skills are helping them thrive in some of today's coolest careers.

[rollins.college/secret-code](https://rollins.college/secret-code)

## Noted

*U.S. News & World Report* has ranked Rollins College the **No. 1 regional university in the South** in its annual rankings of "Best Colleges." This marks the 25th consecutive year that Rollins has been recognized among the top two regional universities in the South.

In addition to ranking as the South's top regional university, Rollins was ranked No. 1 by *U.S. News & World Report* for **best undergraduate teaching programs**.

Niche, a school rankings and student review aggregator, named Rollins the **No. 1 liberal arts college in Florida**.





By Rob Humphreys '16MBA | Photo by Scott Cook



Chemistry professor Pedro Bernal and his students have installed more than 20,000 life-saving water filters across the Dominican Republic.

## CHALLENGE ACCEPTED

Rollins joins the National Academy of Engineering's Grand Challenges for Engineering Scholars Program, a new educational model that prepares engineering students to face the world's toughest challenges.

Rollins recently joined the prestigious NAE Grand Challenges for Engineering Scholars Program, a global effort by the National Academy of Engineering (NAE) to help students address challenges and opportunities facing humanity in the 21st century. Rollins is the first four-year institution selected to participate in the prestigious program that doesn't grant an engineering degree.

Chris Fuse, associate professor of physics, will lead the program, and this fall's incoming class of pre-engineering students will compose the first cohort.

"All the competencies the NAE put together map seamlessly into our curriculum and beyond," says Fuse, pointing to the program's emphasis on mentored research, multidisciplinary studies, entrepreneurship, multicultural experiences, and social consciousness. "That perfectly mirrors how we want our students to look at the world and try to solve things. The NAE is really talking our language."

The Scholars Program—founded in 2009 by Duke, Olin College of Engineering, and the University of Southern California—grew out

of the NAE Grand Challenges report, published in 2008, which calls for the "continuation of life on the planet, making our world more sustainable, secure, healthy, and joyful."

Working toward that vision, the NAE Grand Challenges established 14 goals, which include everything from making solar energy economical and engineering better medicines to providing access to clean water and preventing nuclear terror. Every student will write an annual reflection, take a capstone course, and have the opportunity to engage in student-faculty collaborative research, community-based projects, field studies, real-world business applications, and career networking.

"Our students are our research collaborators," says Susan Singer, vice president for academic affairs and provost. "We integrate them into the whole process of science and engineering. Add that to the NAE component and we're really educating the whole student. We're attentive to what it takes to be a liberally educated scientist, and that's pretty powerful. It's a whole different approach to science education."

Learn more about the Grand Challenges for Engineering Scholars Program at [rollins.college/grand-challenges](http://rollins.college/grand-challenges).





## Pass the Popcorn

*The Maltese Falcon. Sunset Boulevard. Ken Burns' Prohibition.* These were a few of the visual learning tools students drew upon to immerse themselves in film noir. *Private Lies* is set in 1932 in a Gotham-style city modeled on Chicago and New York, so students had to dive into areas like Prohibition, jazz, and crime and punishment. "I was able to plunge into the subject and learn what makes film noir the artform it is and why the filmmakers made certain choices," says theatre major Emmi Rubick Green '20. "It's truly been a journey through the liberal arts."

## Fashioning the Right Look

For AnnMarie Morrison '20, a double major in theatre and business management, serving as *Private Lies'* costume designer meant puzzling through the challenges each actor might face in a film noir setting. It also provided opportunity for personal reflection: "The first-year student in the costume shop I was before would be so amazed by the researcher and costume designer I am now."



## Dapper Moves

Theatre major Parker King '20 researched family life and choreographed multiple dance scenes, including one that takes place in a speakeasy. "I had never done an intense research program like this before," she says, "and now that it's over, there is such a sense of accomplishment and pride in the work."

## Scientists of the Stage

Students researched a topic or technique, then tested whether it translated to the stage. Charles calls this "embodied research" the theatrical equivalent of being a scientist. What caused someone to commit a crime during the Great Depression, for instance? "This allowed us not only to act the scene, but to really feel it," says theatre major Faith Artis '21. "We were able to workshop exactly what topics we wanted to explore."

# SPONTANEOUS PREPARATION

It sounds counterintuitive, but 14 students spent the summer researching how best to stage an improvised play.

Don't let the "improv" part fool you. Plenty of prep went into this production—and it all started this past summer with the Student-Faculty Collaborative Scholarship Program (SFCSP), now in its 20th year at Rollins.

Well before casting began for November's *Private Lies: Improvised Film Noir*, theatre professor David Charles worked alongside 14 students from a variety of majors to research every aspect of the original play, from early 20th-century culture to depictions of cops and mobsters on the silver screen.

For two months, 30 to 40 hours a week, they developed a blueprint for the show. In the mornings, it was theory and dramaturgy. Afternoons called for scenic dynamics and testing on the Annie Russell stage. Months later, each audience literally made the final product their own.

Charles, an improv performer himself, has partnered with students through SFCSP to create four other original Rollins plays in the genre. The experience has helped many student collaborators go on to successful careers, including SAK Comedy Lab's Chelsea Hilend '10 '18MBA and Ana Eligio '09, freelance director Rob Yoho '10, Orlando Fringe Festival's Travis Ray '11, and Emily Steward '14, who teaches improv in Hawaii.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Celebrating its 20th year at Rollins, the Student-Faculty Collaborative Scholarship Program has received \$1.7 million in funding for 580 projects, nearly 20 percent of which have been published in scholarly journals, compared to benchmark schools' rate of 1 to 2 percent. Three in four participants go on to attend grad school.

# Success Story

As a best-selling author and a full-time librarian, Kristen Arnett '12 is used to digging into a subject and finding her way to something new.

Kristen Arnett '12 is not a taxidermist. So, when she started to write her *New York Times* best-selling novel, *Mostly Dead Things*—a book steeped in rich details about, among other things, the world of taxidermy—Arnett knew she'd be doing some research. A lot of research, in fact. Fortunately, research is a task for which she's well qualified.

"As a librarian, you're always trying to help people find the question under the question," explains Arnett. "People will ask you something, and it's your job to say, 'OK, that's kind of what they're asking, but here's what they're really trying to ask.' That's part of my writing too. I'm always trying to dig into what I'm trying to say."

This dig-in mentality comes naturally to Arnett, who has worked in libraries most of her life. As a nontraditional undergrad student in Rollins' Hamilton Holt School, Arnett worked full-time at a public library while pursuing a bachelor's degree in English en route to a master's in library science. But at some point, immersed in the English department's round-table discussions about the world's great literature and robust studies on language as an artform, Arnett realized she'd developed another passion.

"I just really fell in love with writing," she says. "I already wrote on my own—it was something I did for myself—but it wasn't something I considered sharing with other people."

At Rollins, Arnett began to develop the writerly identity that now distinguishes her: an author for whom place is as much a living, breathing character as it is a set piece. And on America's most beautiful campus, her imagination thrived.

"Rollins is like this little jewel," she says. "All the trees and the drippy Spanish moss and the lake. As a person who loves to write about place, being there was ideal. Just to look out at all the landscape and see how juicy and green and alive it is all the time. It very much influenced how I write about setting, for sure."

In the last semester of her senior year, Arnett was selected as an intern for Rollins' annual Winter with the Writers literary festival, an opportunity she now says changed her life. Working alongside the program's director, Carol Frost, to produce the month-long literary festival was a turning point in the way she thought of writing as a career.

She hung posters and planned social media advertising. She coordinated logistics for visiting writers and seated guests at readings. She had drinks and traded notes with her literary heroes.

"I loved every part of it—everything I did," she says. "Sitting in a group and workshopping and talking about writing in that kind of capacity—it really kind of fueled me," she says.

After graduation, Arnett took a position as an interlibrary loan specialist at Rollins' Olin Library. She began her master's in library science as planned—but now she had a dual ambition that included working tirelessly to advance her writing career, submitting to journals, applying to fellowships, and even editing an issue of *Specs Journal*, Rollins' literary magazine. Her strong connection to the College meant that she could continue turning to Rollins colleagues and mentors for advice about her writing career.

"I definitely got a lot of answers from English department professors like Carol Frost and Vidhu Aggarwal, whom I'm still very close with," she says. "They just gave a lot of positive reinforcement about what it looks like to be a young writer in the writing world—the shape of it and how to approach it."

Soon, the hustle paid off. A fellowship with the Lambda Literary Society led to a high-profile publication. A nod from a well-known writer, Roxane Gay, earned her attention from other higher-profile journals. A summer workshop at Tin House put her on the map with a publisher that would eventually release her short-story collection and novel.

Along the way, Arnett has never lost her fondness for librarianship. Today she's the access services librarian at Barry Law School, a job she says continues to serve her as a lifelong lover of research and the written word. As for the success she's found as a writer, she still seems a bit surprised that the passion she stumbled upon as a student at Rollins has become such a force in her life.

"When I'm writing," she says, "I'm writing for me and am just kind of ... hopeful. I hope somebody can connect with it. I don't know who. So to have so many people connect has felt so special and really good. It's this nice kind of thing that bridges gaps between people and communities—it's really lovely."







the

# ARTrepreneurs

Armed with arts degrees, these Rollins grads have harnessed their creative passions to launch successful businesses in everything from organic spirits to footwear.

**Andy Warhol famously said,  
“Being good in business is the  
most fascinating kind of art.”**

The inverse, however, can also hold true: Being good at art—or perhaps more importantly, mastering the skills developed by studying art—can make for the most fascinating kind of business.

At the intersection of the arts and entrepreneurship are the artrepreneurs, those who harness their creative passions and innovative way of thinking to stake out professional endeavors all their own.

On the surface, the worlds of art and business might seem incongruent, but dig deeper and the crossover and commonalities become more apparent. Artists tend to solve problems through creative ways of thinking that, like innovative companies, operate in the realm of uncertainty and opportunity, instead of rote and routine.

Theater majors learn to tell stories, improvise, and make connections. Art history majors learn to see possibilities and identify trends. Studio art majors learn to create their own brand, harnessing the power of reflection and observation. For Doug Storer '83, that brand became Night Tech Gear, which is sold in more than 50 countries around the world. The studio art major says his Rollins education taught him how to see an idea through from concept to completion.

Studying art history at Rollins—where creativity is an inextricable ingredient of entrepreneurship—turned Milicent Armstrong '09 and Lindsay Muscato '07 into visionaries in the world of fashion. Theatre major David Cohen '02 learned how to get up in front of an audience time and time again until he got it right, just as he's done in his many successful business ventures that demand improvisation and adaptability.

Here's how these four arts majors went from Rollins to the real world ready to make their marks.







“Rollins helped me develop a certain discipline that provided a sense of structure to my daily regime.”



## Lindsay Muscato '07

Founder, Teleties | Major: Art history

Well before Lindsay Muscato '07 could create the perfect go-to hair accessory, she had to cinch up a few loose ends.

“Rollins helped me develop a certain discipline that provided a sense of structure to my daily regime,” says Muscato, whose Orlando-based Teleties company produces all-in-one hair ties that double as stylish, stackable bracelets. “It was a foundation that helped me balance starting and managing a business while also being there for my family.”

While at Rollins, Muscato founded her first company, Lindsay Phillips (her maiden name), which developed an interchangeable footwear concept based on the “Switchflop” sandal she pioneered in high school. Muscato sold the company in 2013 to industry leader Trimfoot, which continues to manufacture Lindsay Phillips brand shoes.

“The liberal arts allowed me to foster my creative side, which was a driving force to my entrepreneurial spirit,” she says. “At Rollins, I learned how to think outside the box, which has been a huge asset in the business world. My liberal arts education taught me the importance of preparation for business planning and taking action to execute.”

Muscato credits Rollins’ small classes for providing the ideal learning environment and her art history major for showing her there’s more than one way to interpret something. The latter became especially useful when she started conceptualizing designs, researching materials, and testing prototypes.

As for Muscato’s Rollins connections today, she doesn’t have to look far. Her husband, Brantley Muscato '12MBA, is an alumnus of the Crummer Graduate School of Business, as is her CFO/COO, Trent Forquer '12MBA. And Teleties’ first intern, communication major Mackenzie Carter '21, helped launch the company.

Muscato appreciates how Rollins fostered skills that taught her how to think as opposed to what to think. That approach, she says, “continues to play a large role in balancing my work and personal life.”



# Doug Storer '83

Founder and CEO, Night Tech Gear | Major: Studio art

In 2016, after 30-plus years in the corporate world—many of them driving sales programs for Fortune 500 companies—Doug Storer '83 was ready for a change.

Kicking around a bright idea for a startup, he reached out to the Center for Advanced Entrepreneurship at Rollins' Crummer Graduate School of Business.

"The guidance, mentorship, and connections proved to be invaluable to our success," says Storer, who went on to found Night Tech Gear, a shoe-light technology company that caters to athletes and workers. "[Finance professor] Bill Grimm was one of the first to believe in us when I showed up at his office with a crude prototype of a shoe. And [operations management professor] Peter McAlindon and others were always available for just-in-time support."

Night Tech Gear has since been featured on *Shark Tank*, *Good Morning America*, and *The Today Show*, as well as in *Forbes* and nearly 100 global media outlets, and the company has generated sales in more than 50 countries.

Storer can trace the foundation for his success to lessons learned as a studio art major at Rollins.

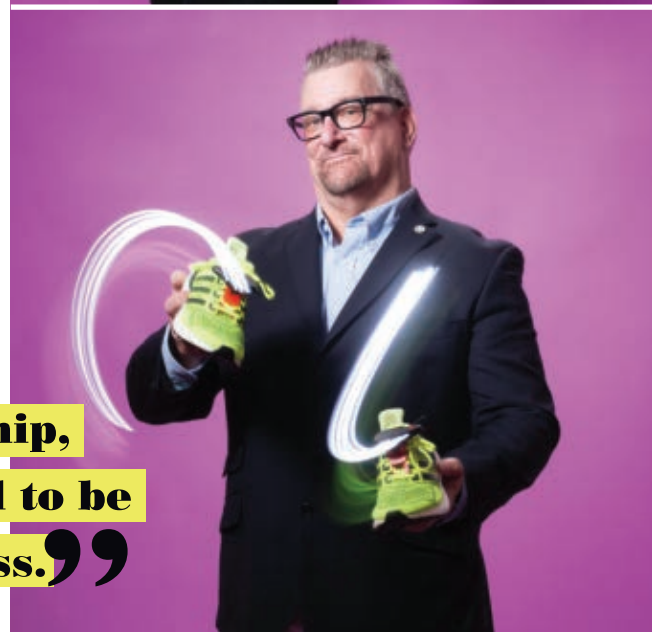
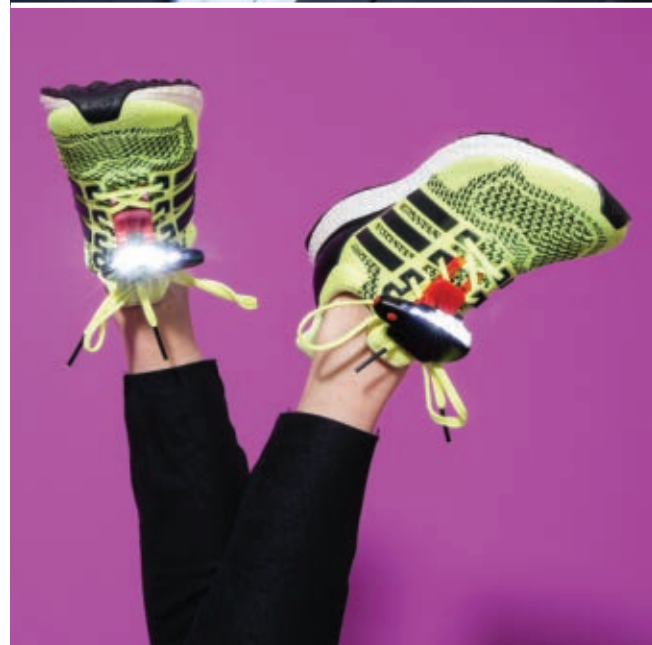
"The fine arts allowed me to be creative," he says. "I learned how to conceptualize, design, and implement my ideas. I learned to think differently. That was powerful."

Graphic design and photography were areas where Storer felt free to express himself, and philosophy classes helped him learn different approaches to thinking. Studying Renaissance art and architecture during a winter term in Italy was one of his most impactful memories from his time at Rollins.

Those experiences, he says, definitely translated to the workplace, where creative problem-solving was key to executive decision-making.

"Rollins allowed me to exercise my intellectual curiosity by combining the arts, philosophy, and business without a preconceived idea of what I was going to do with all of that. To have vision, you must be open to all possibilities and not constrained by the status quo."

**“The guidance, mentorship, and connections proved to be invaluable to our success.”**





**“The ability to take risks has opened up opportunities I otherwise wouldn’t have seen.”**



## David Cohen '02

Founder/Owner/Master Distiller, Manifest Distilling | Major: Theatre

Tucked away in a sleek, industrial warehouse, Jacksonville’s only full-scale organic distillery is a testament to sustainable agriculture and American master craftsmanship, with a healthy dose of the liberal arts thrown in for good measure.

In just five years, Manifest Distilling has gone from startup status to selling its spirits across the state at high-end restaurants such as Luma on Park and Waldorf Astoria’s Bull & Bear. For founder, owner, and master distiller David Cohen '02, the sweet taste of success wouldn’t have been possible without repeatedly missing the mark.

“Failing has been my most important work,” says Cohen, looking back on a career that includes opening and operating several companies, from real estate to film production to publishing.

Cohen looks at each failure as a success of sorts, but only because he’s moved past it to start something new, noting that the key difference is not making the same mistakes again.

“In an Instagrammable world, we don’t often get exposed to how often failure is a part of the success story. Rollins, and specifically the arts, gave me a skill set and confidence to recognize this and forge ahead.”

As a theatre major, Cohen experienced how formal training in the arts builds a unique type of resilience.

“Putting yourself on display, to your peers and the public, requires a certain amount of crazy and bravery,” he says. “I feel that opened a path that allows me to put myself out on a ledge, regularly. That ability to take risks has opened up opportunities I otherwise wouldn’t have seen. Most of that behavior was forged in the Annie Russell or the Fred Stone. Learning to fail gave me a skill set that I don’t think could have been learned in a classroom.”



# Milicent Armstrong '09

Founder and CEO, Artemis Design Co. | Majors: Art history and French

During a Rollins study abroad experience in Istanbul, Milicent Armstrong '09 fell in love with Turkish textiles and how they could be repurposed into shoes and accessories.

A few years after graduation, her first collection was picked up by renowned retailer Steven Alan and gained the attention of *The Wall Street Journal*, *Town & Country*, *Esquire*, and interior designers the world over.

Today, Artemis Design Co. has grown to include a network of cobblers, suppliers, and manufacturers in Turkey and Morocco who produce critically acclaimed products that enjoy a devoted following in the U.S., United Kingdom, and Japan.

"Looking back on it," says Armstrong, "I was just experimenting with an idea when I started Artemis, but it also required a certain amount of curiosity, confidence, and creativity to pursue the idea and make it a reality. Rollins and my liberal arts education helped me develop these qualities, and they have been instrumental in starting and running my business."

Armstrong credits professor Kimberly Dennis for getting her hooked on the intricacies of art history.

"We would spend hours in her classes analyzing and treasure-hunting for all the symbolism and history in an artwork," explains Armstrong. "That opened my eyes to the depth and beauty of it and taught me how to look for the same richness in the everyday. This has been instrumental in my branding and marketing work for Artemis in that we are always striving to weave interesting stories and cultural history into our products and brand message."

In the classroom, courses in cultural and gender studies grew Armstrong's understanding of the world. Away from campus, spending time abroad complemented her studies and led to an appetite for international business.

Throughout life, says Armstrong, concepts learned at Rollins have helped guide her decision-making and fostered the important social skills necessary for business relationships like teamwork, understanding, and empathy.

**“Hunting for symbolism in art opened my eyes to depth and beauty and taught me to look for the same richness in the everyday.”**



# A Light in the Dark

As the president and CEO of Lighthouse Central Florida and Lighthouse Works, Kyle Johnson '07 says he's found his place in the world.

Kyle Johnson '07 learned a lot as an English major at Rollins. But the most important lesson was one he thought he already knew. "Someone told me to take Rick Bommeljé's *Listening* course, and I thought in my head, 'I've been listening my whole life,'" he recalls. "No. I hadn't."

Turns out Johnson had a lot to learn about something he thought was innate. He remembers testing his hearing in the class, carefully reviewing 911 emergency recordings, studying the environmental and psychological and physical noise that interferes with close listening—and it changed how he saw the world.

It was an experience that played out more than once at Rollins, where Johnson attended the Hamilton Holt School while working full-time in wealth management.

"By the time I got to Rollins, I think I had a call to service in me, but I didn't really understand it," he says. "I cared about service, but going to Rollins definitely reinforced that. It made me feel like I was on the right track."

Johnson is the president and CEO of the nonprofit Lighthouse Central Florida and its sister B Corporation, Lighthouse Works, both of which serve blind and visually impaired members of the Central Florida community.

"If you're born blind or become visually impaired at any age in Central Florida, for the past 42 years, Lighthouse Central Florida is the organization you'd turn to, to help you live as though you're not blind," he explains.

Lighthouse Works, meanwhile, is a social enterprise subsidiary that creates competitive career opportunities for the visually impaired and generates revenue for the organization outside of philanthropy and government grants. Johnson explains that seven out of 10 visually impaired people are unemployed or out of the labor market despite having college degrees or previous work experience or being entrepreneurs themselves.

"Unfortunately, the world assumes you're incapable of anything if you're blind," says Johnson. "But all the careers that people have at Lighthouse Works are no different from mine—same interview process, same accountability. There's upward mobility and benefits, you name it."

Johnson speaks so passionately about his cause that it's easy to assume he found his purpose early in life. But the truth is, Johnson didn't always know this is where his path would lead. After graduating high school, he spent a few years taking community-college classes and working before pursuing his education in earnest.

Eventually, he enrolled at Rollins, eager to earn a degree that would advance his budding career in wealth management and excited to study among experts at a respected institution. He was not disappointed. At Rollins, with the help of professors like Bommeljé, Johnson learned how to stretch his expectations for himself. He remembers pitching the topic of his capstone paper to Maggie Dunn: a short poem by the 13th-century poet Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi.

"It's a very small poem for a very big paper," he remembers. "I was really nervous that she wouldn't allow me to do it, but she supported it and celebrated it. She showed me that you don't have to walk the same lines that everyone expects you should walk. You should reach and do your best to be yourself and who you are."

Now, Johnson is the one sharing that lesson with Rollins students. As community partners, Lighthouse Central Florida and Lighthouse Works host Rollins students for a variety of learning opportunities. Johnson has worked alongside social entrepreneurship professor Cecilia McInnis-Bowers and the Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Hub to create real-world, problem-solving workshops for students that expose them to the work at Lighthouse. For the past several years, a Crummer student has sat on the board. This year, the organizations will sponsor an on-campus "Dining in the Dark" event to raise awareness about visual impairment.

Each project is an opportunity for Johnson to pass on the wisdom he's gained through his own Rollins experience—a task he says he's happy and compelled to take on—and to listen once again to his ever-present call to serve.

"I'm not kidding when I say, I had no idea where I'd be in my career," he says. "Honestly, that's why I'm so passionate about the work I do in this sector because it really gave me my life. For me, having gone to Rollins and then experiencing this renaissance in myself—where I literally didn't know what I should be doing in my life, and now I'm doing exactly what I was born to do—it's a dream come true."





# *the King of Kindness*

Why is there a renewed groundswell of interest in Fred Rogers '51 '74H? The answer is as radically simple as the man himself.

A lily-thin man with a bedtime voice and a stash of cardigan sweaters had what he thought were splendid ideas for a children's television show quite a few years ago. He would call himself Mister Rogers. And Mister Rogers would feed fish, tie his shoes, and perhaps explain the wonders of an egg timer going tick ... tick ... tick. Critics said the show would be too slow. Too real. Too nice.

The show lasted 912 episodes across four decades because Fred Rogers '51 '74H knew something that maybe the adults had forgotten: All we really want is a trusted friend. And who could be more trustworthy than a man so gentle and deliberate that he seemed to literally listen from the other side of the TV screen?

It's been 16 years since Fred Rogers passed away, and 18 years since he sang the final song of the final episode from the most welcoming neighborhood ever known. And now we're experiencing a second coming. In 2018, *Won't You Be My Neighbor?* became the highest-grossing biographical documentary of all time. In November, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, starring Tom Hanks as Fred, will debut.

A logical question has arisen: Why are we still so interested in Fred Rogers? In talking with family, classmates from Rollins, the author whose story in *Esquire* inspired the movie more than 20 years later, even Tom Hanks, little themes about Fred start to piece together like stained glass in a church. His work ethic. His temperament. His transparency. His power. If we're as honest as he'd want us to be, a revelation about ourselves also emerges: We need his message and his way, and we need Fred Rogers more than ever.









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*Fred always had a piano nearby and wrote more than 500 songs for the show alone, not counting other concerts and kids operas.*

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*A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood is based on author Tom Junod's experience with Fred while writing a feature story for Esquire in 1998.*

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**Joanne Rogers (Fred's wife of 50 years):** All the renewed interest has taken me by surprise. The movie producer and the writers said they read the story about Fred way back and never forgot about it.

**Tom Hanks:** The screenplay bounced around years ago with no director, so it was just an interesting idea. [Director] Mari Heller and I had been exchanging ideas to work together, but either my stuff didn't gel with her or vice versa. Then she called me with *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*. We agreed to start shooting it as soon as I was available.

**Joanne Rogers:** The biggest shock of my life is when I heard Tom Hanks said "yes" to being cast as Fred.

**Junod:** The screenwriters contacted me in 2015—17 years after the story was published. You think it's all passed you by and then it's like this freight train coming right at you. They changed my name to Lloyd Vogel in the film because it isn't completely who I am—my mother didn't die when I was young, and Lloyd's more cynical than me. But my connection with Fred ... it was so unexpected, and that's pretty accurate in the movie. I wept through half the screening. It reminds me of what he's meant to me.

**Hanks:** I learned so many details [about Fred]. He woke up at 5 a.m. and never drank coffee? Crazy good details!

**John Rogers (Fred and Joanne's son):** I told Tom Hanks he was perfect for the role because he's genuinely nice and because Dad must have watched *Forrest Gump* a hundred times.

**Hanks:** My biggest challenge for this role? I had to *slow down*.



**Joanne Rogers:** Tom asked me at dinner one night if Fred really talked that slowly. I said, “Yep, that’s him.” Some people tried to get Fred to speed up for the TV show, but he said, “Nope, the kids understand me fine.”

**Dan Crozier (son of Fred’s sister, Elaine, and music professor at Rollins):** Uncle Fred was never afraid of time. He had a routine to start every day—wake up at 5, pray, study the Bible, and swim.

**Gloria Cook (close family friend and music professor at Rollins):** Fred’s swimming wasn’t really ... swimming. It was very slow, very relaxed. You’d find yourself just staring.

**Crozier:** My dad would time Uncle Fred when he swam in the bay in Nantucket. He wanted to swim for exactly 17 minutes. Then my dad would blow a conch shell as a signal to stop. Uncle Fred never rushed. Every minute had a purpose in his life.

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*Fred was born in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, where his family had successful business interests. His great-grandfather was also a founder of RCA, the original parent company of NBC TV.*

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**John Rogers:** My grandparents guarded Dad because he was an only child for his first 11 years, and that was around the time of the Lindbergh baby kidnapping. People with money were concerned.

**Crozier:** He had bad allergies too—another reason he stayed inside. He had to create his own ways to play. After my mom was adopted, he had more freedom.

**John Rogers:** A man named George Allen taught Dad how to fly a plane when Dad was 16 or 17. My grandmother didn’t know anything about it. The first time Dad flew a Piper Cup solo, sure enough, Grandma shows up at the airport and asks George, “Where’s Fred?” George points to the sky and says, “Up there.” I guess Dad had a little rebelliousness in him.

**Joanne Rogers:** He was never comfortable with the wealth.

**John Rogers:** Dad said, “The less you need, the richer you are.” He believed in hard work and self-sufficiency. He didn’t want to rely on his family’s money.

**Cook:** Fred spent enough time around the family’s manufacturing businesses to be familiar with all the social classes. I think that’s a reason he could put himself in the shoes of others.

**Crozier:** My mother said that even at a young age Uncle Fred started to shy away from meat. He’d eat lots of side dishes and say in that voice of his, “Oh. That ... is ... excellent.”

**John Rogers:** He said, “I don’t eat anything that has a mother.” He was also concerned about addictions. His only vice was pouring a little Kahlua on ice cream because he liked the taste.

**Joanne Rogers:** His grandfather told him if he didn’t smoke or drink until he turned 21, he’d buy him a boat. They both lived up to their word. Fred used the boat on Lake Virginia near Rollins.

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*After one year at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire, Fred transferred to Rollins, where he graduated with a degree in music composition, met his future wife, and began to visualize his purpose.*

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**Crozier:** All I really know about his time at Dartmouth is that he wasn’t comfortable and maybe didn’t feel accepted.

**John Rogers:** He froze his butt off at Dartmouth. He told me it was so cold at night that he didn’t want to walk down the hallway to the bathroom, so he’d just relieve himself out the window.

**Joanne Rogers:** In winter, the school stored stacks of yellow squash outside instead of using refrigerator space. Fred didn’t like squash or the climate. He wasn’t crazy about the music program either. I’m not sure whose idea it was for him to go to school there [laughing]. After his freshman year, a man arrived at Dartmouth—Arnold Kvam. He told Fred about this small school in Florida known for music. It was Rollins.

**Jeannine Morrison (Rollins classmate and lifelong friend):**

There were only about 600 students at Rollins then. Fred liked that it was more personal ... and that he could be the center of attention with all his jokes.

**Joanne Rogers:** I told Fred, “There are a lot of rich students here. You’re just one of many.” He was sensitive that someone might like him for his family’s money.

**Morrison:** He’d park his car where no one could see it. When he took us for rides, he’d point to a little bag on the dash so we’d chip in for gas.

**Crozier:** The show [*Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood*] had some roots back to Rollins. The music. The values. At the west end of campus is a plaque that says, “Life is for service.” It became one of Uncle Fred’s mantras.

**Joanne Rogers:** His junior year he took a trip to France with a Rollins instructor. They went to an orphanage for war orphans. He talked about it a lot. It broke his heart.

**Morrison:** He went home at Easter that year and saw children’s programs on television. He thought it was a wasted opportunity to improve the lives of kids. Things started to click.

**Joanne Rogers:** I was mildly surprised when he told me he was going to New York City after graduation to work in television. He could have taken over the family business and done very well. But he wouldn’t have been happy.

**John Rogers:** So he went to New York and swept floors. Dad knew he was going to do something for children eventually.

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*Fred helped shape children's programming in Pittsburgh and Canada from 1953 to 1966 while earning a degree from seminary during his lunch breaks. All of it led to the birth of Mister Rogers, a concept so simple in form that it was radical.*

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**Hanks:** The show was so odd, so specifically odd, in the way he dedicated everything to the audience he made it for—children.

**John Rogers:** Some people thought maybe he was acting. But those are his words. That's his real voice. It's so genuine that I'm not sure the pilot would succeed today.

**Crozier:** Our family spent summers in Nantucket. He'd go there to write scripts in "the workhouse." When I was old enough, I'd pick him up at the airport in Nantucket and he'd say, "I leave two weeks from today and need to accomplish this and this and this." He kept a detailed mental calendar. He'd disappear in the workhouse, come out and visit on the porch for 10 minutes, and go back in to work.

**John Rogers:** Dad drank this stuff called Postum. It looks like coffee but doesn't have caffeine. He had that fear of addiction. Yet he had this incredible energy. He said he was high on life, and his work was a big part of his life.

**Joanne Rogers:** Whenever he had a hard time getting started on a theme, he did what he called "sharpening pencils," which basically meant doing all kinds of menial tasks until he thought of something. He'd come onto the porch and say, "Does anyone have any ideas?"

**John Rogers:** He wrote everything. But he did use lyrics I wrote as a 10-year-old for the song "Tree, Tree, Tree." Besides the word "tree," there are only 10 words in the entire song. I hear the lyrics are used in a drinking game now. That's my contribution [laughing].



**Crozier:** In his study I'd see his sketches for songs and stacks of books that he massively annotated—like the collected works of Freud and the Bible. His Christian faith formed the underpinnings of the show, including the principle of "my neighbor." He couldn't be outward about it, though, because the show was on PBS.

**John Rogers:** We didn't have a TV in Nantucket—we still don't. We had one in Pittsburgh, and we only used it on Thursday nights to watch *The Waltons*.

**Sharon Carnahan (executive director of the Child Development and Student Research Center at Rollins):** It's a big mistake to think he was just a great guy who liked children. He was prolific behind the show, involved in camera angles, music, and each word. It wasn't about ratings. It was, "How can I use this to make the world a better place for children?" It's genius.

**Hanks:** I wish now that I'd made Fred's show a regular part of [my kids'] TV viewing. I would have been doing them a favor to have Mister Rogers talking to them, looking them in the eye, and explaining the wonders and joys of "the neighborhood."

**Cook:** We named our son, Daniel, after a puppet on the show, Daniel the Tiger, long before we met Fred and Joanne. He had a way of making us feel good through the TV.

**Joanne Rogers:** He worked better than he played. One of his great pleasures was to respond to every piece of mail in his beautiful handwriting. Later he used email.

**Junod:** I recently found a trove of notes from him. They still blow me away. He told me that he prayed for me, and I know he meant it. I can hear the playfulness of his voice but the seriousness of our friendship. Who does that?

**Rita Bornstein (the 13th president of Rollins, from 1990-2004):** I remember watching when he accepted a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Emmys [in 1997]. He had a whole room of celebrities in tears. He took time to listen. He legitimately cared. How many people can say they have someone like that in their lives?

**Joanne Rogers:** I was horrified what they might try to do to him on certain talk shows. The night he went on *The Tonight Show* with Joan Rivers, I didn't know about it until he'd left the house. He didn't watch TV, so he had no idea what he might be getting into.

**Crozier:** The family knew Joan Rivers could be caustic and that she might try to embarrass Uncle Fred. He sang one of his children's songs to her and almost brought her to tears.

**Cook:** That's when everyone knew that she was an actor, and he wasn't.

**Crozier:** He didn't mind the spoofs about him as long as they didn't cause harm to others. I saw him upset once about a radio skit. Someone imitated his voice and said, "What if you take mommy's hair spray and daddy's lighter and put them together?" He said, "A child might think that's really me. They could do something bad."



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*Everything on the show was purposeful: feeding the fish, changing the shoes, the slow pace, even the simplicity of the set.*

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**Joanne Rogers:** He'd have a hard time today. It bothered him a great deal when people wouldn't forgive each other or reconcile their differences.

**John Rogers:** I only remember 20 minutes of my life when we were angry at each other. I'd had a few minor accidents, so he'd taken my car away. One evening I needed to get my girlfriend home. I grabbed the keys and drove out in an ice storm ... and slid into a lamppost. The damage wasn't serious, but Dad and I really got into it.

**Joanne Rogers:** I think I left the room for that. Raising boys really stretched Fred.

**John Rogers:** After all the shouting, Dad got real quiet and said in his normal voice, "Wow. That's the angriest I've ever been. That felt pretty good." And that was it.

**Crozier:** He didn't have to say anything. If you simply sensed his disappointment, it was really scary. One time he thought John and I were being mean to John's younger brother. Uncle Fred didn't like that and I knew it, so I ran to a closet and hid from him. His disapproval felt awful. Think about it—he's Mister Rogers.

**John Rogers:** Dad was so kind, he could easily make you feel like crawling under the carpet for doing something wrong to someone.

He once heard that a guy had swindled me out of a little money. Dad invited him to come over. Didn't yell at him. He just said, "I feel bad for you to want to do that to my son." The guy melted.

**Joanne Rogers:** Fred would only accept about \$25,000 a year to do the show.

**Cook:** He bought secondhand clothes to wear. He didn't want the extravagant life of a celebrity. Still, everyone gravitated toward him. When he and Joanne would fly to Florida for winters, I'd have to sit and wait at the airport because there were so many people around him. He talked with every single one of them.

**Bornstein:** My husband and I went to have lunch with Fred and Joanne at a restaurant in Pittsburgh once. They were at their customary table, behind a pillar. People found him anyway.

**John Rogers:** Our family had to share him a lot. I've said he came as close as you can come to being Jesus Christ himself. It bothered me that I couldn't measure up to his example, until I was about 30 years old. He would have been the first to tell me "just be you."

**Crozier:** Once you were in his presence, you didn't want to leave. He'd politely say, "Now, Dan, I need to go do this and this. Would you like to come do it with me?" It was his way of saying, "I have to go."







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*In 1991, Rollins honored Fred by laying a stone in the school's Walk of Fame near the house where he lived as a student. The ceremony didn't go quite as planned.*

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**Bornstein:** Oh gosh. The Walk of Fame.

**Joanne Rogers:** Fred was concerned about word getting out. He told Rita, "If you want me to spend time with the adults, then don't make this an occasion for children. If children come, they'll get first dibs."

**Bornstein:** He asked me to work it out.

**Carnahan:** The administration wanted to keep it low-key. But I said, "Why not have him visit our children's development center? We won't make a big deal out of it."

**Bornstein:** Word got out. Children came from everywhere. Girls were wearing princess dresses. Boys were all excited to see Mister Rogers. I thought, "Oh ... my ... God."

**Carnahan:** When he came to our back area, he almost couldn't get to the door. In all the commotion, he saw one little girl visibly upset. He knelt down, looked at her, and said, "You're wondering how I'm going to get back into the television, aren't you?" Then he took time to explain to her how television works and that he'd be OK. I could not believe how he made each person feel special despite everything going on.

**Cook:** We were at the Walk of Fame ceremony with our two boys, Daniel and Andy. I didn't know Fred at the time. For some reason he came over to talk with my sons in the middle of the crowd. That's what started our friendship.

**Bornstein:** He did what only Fred could do. I have a picture from the ceremony of him surrounded by children—the children I was supposed to keep away.

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*Esquire first published Junod's story about Fred, "Can You Say ... Hero?," in November 1998. The story tracked how their relationship grew from the moment the two met—something Junod never saw coming.*

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**Junod:** Fred was a wonder to me from the start. I called him from the *Esquire* office in New York, and it turned out he was in an apartment just a few hundred feet away from me. He invited me to come over, so I did. And there he was—in a bathrobe and slippers. He immediately got me talking about a stuffed rabbit from my youth. I felt like I was in an episode of the show.

**Crozier:** Before his interview with Tom Junod, he told me, "I'll be busy for a few days with Tom." He said it as if they were lifelong friends, even though they hadn't met.

**Joanne Rogers:** Fred was more interested in meeting Tom than he was in the article.

**Junod:** I'm sitting there in those first few moments processing how Fred already has me back in my childhood. Then he pulls out a camera and takes a picture of me. He says, "I like to take pictures of my new friends."

**Joanne Rogers:** He carried a Canon camera in his pocket. Whenever he took a picture of someone, he'd mail it to them with a handwritten note.

**Junod:** I remember wondering, "Why has he chosen to take a personal interest in me? Why is there a connection that he not only discovered but has insisted on?" To this day, I'm still not sure why. But I know he had a purpose.

**John Rogers:** Tom was with Dad 24-7, watching his work and his life. Then Tom told the world in his *Esquire* story that the guy on TV really is that guy.

**Junod:** I've done interviews with Brad Pitt, Ashley Judd, Leonardo DiCaprio, a lot of people. But it's journalism. Most people consider it a transaction. Once it's done, you go your separate ways. With Fred, the transaction was never done. I've often thought, "What did I do to deserve this?"

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*Fred and Joanne made their permanent home in Pittsburgh, but for two months in winter they'd travel to Florida and rent a house near the Rollins campus. Wherever Fred went, it became his neighborhood.*

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**Joanne Rogers:** I bought him a laptop and he'd carry it over to campus and sit in classes to learn what he could do with it. I'm not sure what those students thought, sitting next to Mister Rogers.

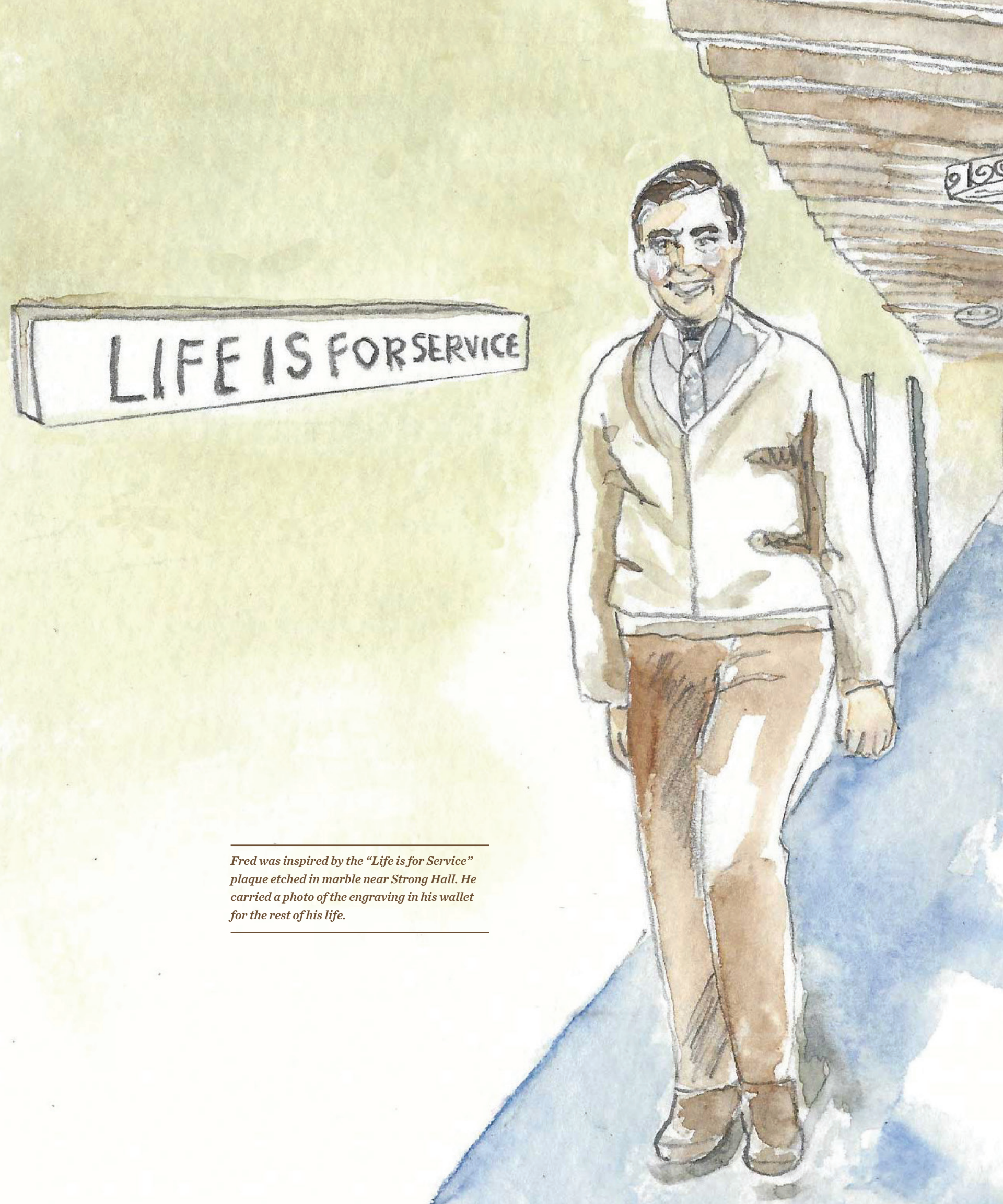
**Daniel Parke '97 (Rollins Hall of Fame basketball player):** I'd see him walking to the chapel to pray every day in winter. Every day. He'd take the time to stop and talk with students as if it were no big deal.

**Crozier:** Uncle Fred would put his face up to the window of my music class and everything would come to a stop. He'd walk in and say, "How are things in this neighborhood?" The students were in awe.

**Cook:** He'd sit at the piano with students and make up songs. The kids would skip their next classes to spend more time with him. He changed the mood wherever he went.

**Bornstein:** One day I took him to lunch at a campus restaurant ... and ... I get emotional just talking about this. As we walked to our table, people stood up one at a time ... until everyone in the restaurant was standing ... applauding. It was so spontaneous. I've never seen anything like it.





LIFE IS FOR SERVICE

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*Fred was inspired by the "Life is for Service" plaque etched in marble near Strong Hall. He carried a photo of the engraving in his wallet for the rest of his life.*

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**Crozier:** Walking is the only thing Uncle Fred did quickly. He took long strides. But as he got older, he slouched a bit. My mom said he was feeling the weight of the world on his shoulders.

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*President George W. Bush presented Fred with the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor, in 2002. Fred rode in the Tournament of Roses Parade as the Grand Marshal on January 1, 2003, and then made the ceremonial coin toss at the Rose Bowl that afternoon. It would be Fred's final public appearance. He died of stomach cancer on February 27 that year.*

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**Crozier:** He had pain for about a year but didn't think too much about it. He took papaya enzyme to help. I found out at Christmas they'd found a mass in his stomach. It was shocking because he seemed so young for that kind of thing [74] and had taken such good care of himself. But he accepted it calmly.

**John Rogers:** He didn't fear death.

**Joanne Rogers:** He'd talk about how wonderful his next journey would be.

**Carnahan:** We had a memorial service for him on campus. Rita Bornstein asked me to speak on behalf of children. The family wanted that. So I spoke from the voice of a child, expressing why we would miss him.

**Crozier:** There was also a memorial service in Pittsburgh, and the message was, "Well done, good and faithful servant." What person could we say that about more than Uncle Fred?

**Bornstein:** His message is timeless: There's always something good to believe in. We could all be a little more like him.

**Junod:** I find myself using his moves all the time. The other day I inadvertently said something that upset my 16-year-old daughter. When I tried to make up for it, she waved me off. So I said calmly, "Oh, you aren't ready for an apology right now. That's fine." A total Fred move.

**Crozier:** The daily reminders of him are all around. My piano is in the McFeely-Rogers studio at Rollins. I weigh 143 pounds, the same as he weighed, and his clothes fit me. For a while it was too sad to wear them, but now I wear one of his honorary doctoral robes to convocation and graduation.

**Cook:** We recently went to the mausoleum in Pittsburgh to visit his memorial site. From a distance, I noticed something around it. As we got closer, I saw the site was surrounded with bags of candy and Rice Krispies treats. Not flowers. Sweet things.

**Carnahan:** We need another Fred Rogers. I think we're realizing that now.

**Hanks:** Fred Rogers made direct eye contact with people to understand them, not to get something [from them].

**Crozier:** A friend told me he saw the trailer for the movie in a theater and two adults in front of him started crying. I think we yearn for the values he lived out.

**John Rogers:** Dad knew what we all need, whether we admit it or not. We're all homesick for kindness.

**Bornstein:** I have a beautiful picture of Fred and me here in my sunroom. It's in a spot where I can look at it every day and hear his voice. It makes me feel good.

**Cook:** I have his pictures all over my studio because I never want to say goodbye. When you're in his neighborhood, you're in a much better place.

**Junod:** I keep a profound reminder of Fred on a table next to a picture of him. I'd left my pen in his apartment when I was there interviewing him. The next day this beige envelope shows up. On the envelope is a message in Fred's perfect calligraphy: "This is Tom's pen." The pen is still in there. I've never opened the envelope.

**Joanne Rogers:** My favorite picture is in a nook where I read. Fred took the picture while he was alone in Nantucket and I was playing an event somewhere. It's a sunset. On it is a Post-it note with a message he wrote in the form of a song: "When the day turns to night, and you are way beyond my sight, I think of you." Simple and beautiful. I'm glad we're thinking of him too.



# Head in the Cloud

How history and sociology major Hiram Todd Norman '94 harnessed the power of the liberal arts to become the overseer of all things digital for The CW Network.

Twenty years ago, Hiram Todd Norman '94 was your typical East Coast kid chasing Hollywood-size dreams. Today, he's on the cutting edge of American pop culture.

As senior vice president of digital for The CW Network, Norman leads a staff of 25 employees focused on identifying and embracing the network's digital-first audience. Under his direction, hit shows like *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, and *Riverdale* find their way onto every platform imaginable, from mobile and desktop to Xbox and AppleTV.

Of course, Norman didn't get here overnight. But he did have a differentiator: a Rollins education that helped guide and support him—in more ways than one.

Entering Rollins in 1990, Norman was part of the last generation before personal computers, email, and the internet. The digital transformation that would forever change society was in its infancy.

Yet the skills gained from a liberal arts education pushed his academic limits and provided a foundation for critical thinking. As an example, he points to the *Sociology in Film and Fiction* course he took with professor emeritus Larry Van Sickle.

"I thought we'd just be watching movies," laughs Norman, "but we had to read a book basically every day, and within a month we wrote 16 papers. That taught me I can absorb a ton of information and make sense of it. In corporate America, to be successful, you need to be able to develop that muscle, to process massive amounts of information and create a point of view."

To some, it might seem odd that a history and sociology major from a small, liberal arts college is running digital operations for one of America's most visible TV networks. On the contrary, says Norman, that kind of background goes a long way in the entertainment industry.

"The industry is always changing," he explains, "so you've got to be really good at adapting and evolving. But that's super exciting. I'd never want to do a job that's always the same old, same old. I always want to be at the forefront of what's happening."

After graduating from Rollins, Norman got a master's in screenwriting from the University of Miami and moved to Los Angeles

shortly after. As luck would have it, a buddy from Rollins, Drew Stepek '94, was working at ESPN and helped the soon-to-be media guru land a contract editing position at EXPN.com, precursor to the X Games' website. One thing led to another and, just like the movies, Norman was on his way.

"That allowed me to get my foot in the door, and it was my first internet job too," says Norman, who went by Todd while at Rollins. "I'm naturally curious, and my time at EXPN allowed me to understand how the web works."

Stops as a producer at ABC.com and interactive marketing agencies followed. Then it was on to director of programming at AOL Television before working his way up to senior vice president of digital media for Warner Brothers' CWTV.com.

In his current role, Norman launched and leads CW Seed, which reaches millions of online users with free original series. He's also responsible for a supply chain that includes web development, social media, creative, branded entertainment, monetization, operations, and emerging platforms.

"I've been at the crossroads of television and technology for a long time," says Norman. "In the early years, it was all about using the internet to promote shows on TV. Then an inflection point happened a decade or so ago where you were able to watch the shows on the internet ... and now we shrink them down to 4½-inch screens so you can watch them on your phone."

As for career advice, Norman's been in the digital game long enough to know that specializing in one technical area isn't the best long-term solution.

"You need to be a high-functioning generalist, and that's what a liberal arts education requires you to be," he explains. "To have a narrow focus of expertise doesn't serve you well in the workforce. I'm looking for people who can solve problems I don't even know exist yet. You need to be able to dip into something and figure it out. I'm really proud of the time I spent at Rollins and the things I learned there. I use them every day."







# MODELING OUR

## 2018-19 Philanthropy at Rollins

**E**ach day in communities around the world, Tars put into action the knowledge, skills, and values they learned at Rollins. They model global citizenship and responsible leadership as entrepreneurs and policymakers, as scientists and arbiters of social justice. Faculty, students, alumni, and friends of the College comprise an interconnected network of changemakers who not only help Rollins deliver on its mission, but carry it out in their own meaningful lives and productive careers.

If you've made a gift to Rollins this past year, you've made it possible for students like Lauren Neldner '20 to earn a Goldwater Scholarship so that one day soon she can engineer earthquake-proof structures. You've made it possible for the College's Center for Career & Life Planning to provide internships to future environmental leaders like Colin Kelly '21. You've made it

possible for Cristina Toppin '21 to become the first Tar ever to attend the Harvard Kennedy School's Public Policy Leadership Conference. These gifts go directly to the heart of our mission—both to the present goals we strive toward every day and to the strategic vision for the future.

Throughout the following pages, you'll discover more examples of how your gifts are empowering Rollins students to join you in modeling our mission. You'll see how you're helping us prepare the next generation of leaders to live out the dreams they've discovered and cultivated at Rollins. With your gifts and through your example, you're demonstrating how the work of a global citizen and responsible leader is never done and how our shared efforts can model the kind of world we want to create—one that values innovation, excellence, and community.



A photograph of two women standing in a hallway with arched doorways. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a black dress with a blue jacket over her shoulders. She is gesturing with her hands as if speaking. The woman on the right has dark hair and is wearing a black top and jacket, holding a white coffee cup. The hallway has a brick floor and warm lighting.

# CHAMPIONING THE NEXT GENERATION

**A** Rollins education is built on a human scale. Each and every day, our students are mentored and challenged by our expert faculty and staff, helping them unlock their unique potential to make the world brighter. But powerful partnerships like these aren't confined to campus. Thanks to efforts like the Career Champions Mentorship Program, Rollins alumni are leveraging their career and life experience to guide students on their journeys to meaningful lives and productive careers. Just ask **Ellie Rushing '19**. The former editor of *The Sandspur* was paired with communications professional Ann Marie Varga '82 '12MHR in the program's second cohort. Rushing coupled Varga's insights with the experience she gained through internships, study abroad, and campus involvement to land a coveted reporting internship at *The Philadelphia Inquirer* after graduation.



# OPENING THE FLOODGATES

**O**ver the past two decades, chemistry professor Pedro Bernal and his students have installed more than 20,000 life-saving water filtration systems throughout rural communities in the Dominican Republic. Their ongoing efforts—as well as other clean water initiatives at the College—received a massive boost thanks to the new Delta Sonic Car Wash Endowed Fund, which was recently established through a \$1 million gift from Ronald '65 and Todd '98 Benderson. The fund will support initiatives, service projects, and other activities that promote and provide clean water for communities around the world.



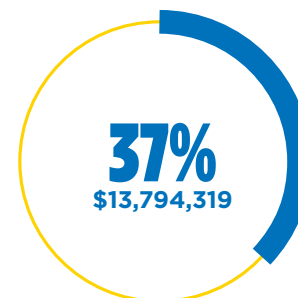




# COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

**F**rom June 1, 2018, to May 31, 2019, Rollins received more than \$37 million in gifts and commitments from alumni, parents, foundations, corporations, students, and friends of the College.

## All Giving by Source



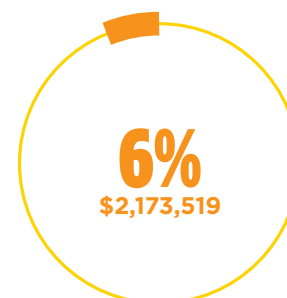
## Alumni



## Parents



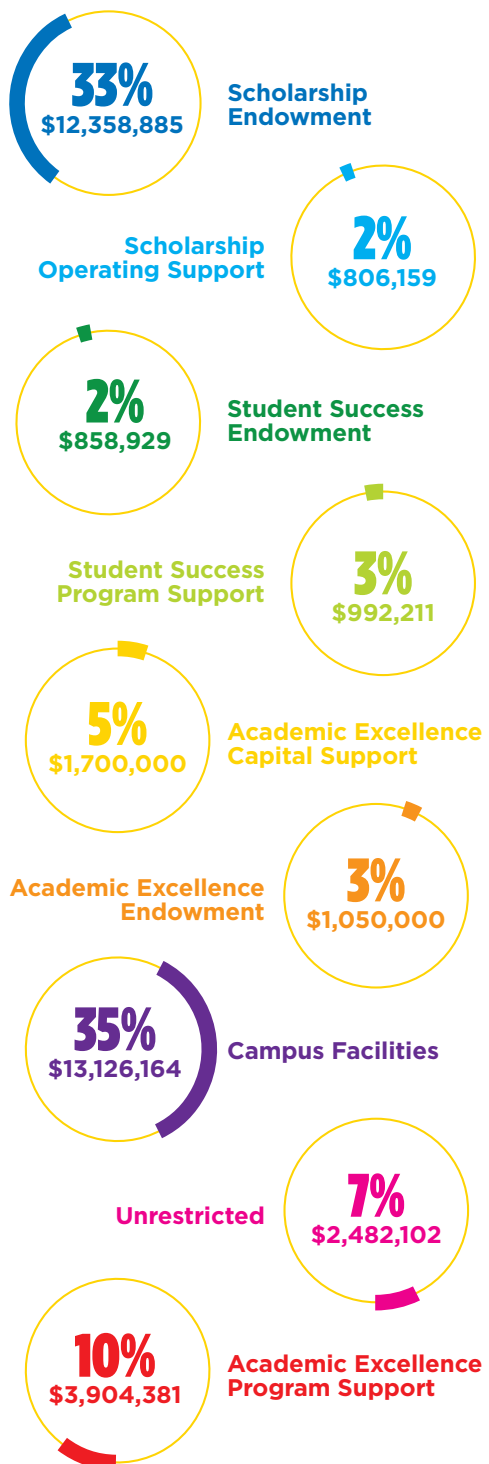
## Corporations & Foundations



## Friends

Your gifts not only support all of the reasons Rollins was ranked the No. 1 regional university in the South this year—they also bolster the intimate and rigorous learning environment that prepares our students and graduates to shine brightly on the national and international stage.

## All Giving by Destination



## SUPPORTING SCIENCE STARS







This past spring, **Lauren Neldner '20** earned a 2019 Goldwater Scholarship, the country's most prestigious undergraduate science scholarship. The physics major based her scholarship-securing essay on her experience two summers ago in the prestigious IRIS Internship Program, a paid seismology research program that included a nine-week stint at Brown University. She felt right at home in the Ivy League lab, thanks to her extensive experience in Rollins' Student-Faculty Collaborative Scholarship Program and the mentorship of Rollins faculty led by physics professor Thom Moore. Neldner, who plans to pursue a PhD in either geophysics or structural engineering, credits her uncommonly early research opportunities and Moore's rigorous standards for helping her stand out among a collection of the country's top science students.



# THE FOUNDATION OF LEADERSHIP

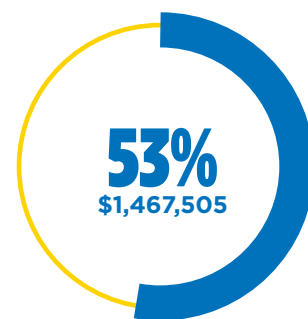


“I give back to Rollins because of the unique opportunities that its faculty, staff, and student body have afforded me,” says Alford Scholar **Cristina Toppin ’21**, one of 46 students who made their first gift to the College on Giving Day 2019. This past year, Toppin—a double major in political science and religious studies—became the first Tar to participate in Harvard Kennedy School’s Public Policy Leadership Conference, an opportunity she credits to the resources and network available to her at Rollins.



# GIVING TO THE ROLLINS FUND

**B**etween June 1, 2018, and May 31, 2019, The Rollins Annual Fund received more than \$2.7 million in current-use gifts from alumni, parents, foundations, corporations, students, and friends of the College.



Alumni



Parents



Corporations & Foundations



Friends

# OUTSIZED IMPACT



**R**ollins was ranked No. 1 in the nation for the percentage of students who participate in alternative breaks for the sixth time in seven years. The College's Immersion program was also ranked as the country's sixth largest alternative break program, which is an incredible feat considering the five schools ranked in front of Rollins—University of Missouri Columbia, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Central Michigan, and University of Delaware—have an average enrollment that is 10 times that of Rollins.



In spring 2017, Rollins launched a new strategic framework—a vision that would guide our collective work today and tomorrow and lead the College and our students toward a more brilliant future. With your support, our faculty, staff, students, and leadership team have been hard at work bringing that vision to life. While no number of pages could capture all of the progress that has been made in the past two years, we wanted to share this reminder of where we’re headed together and celebrate a few of the successes we’ve enjoyed along the way.

## Deepen Student Engagement with the College’s Mission

We will build upon our tradition of innovation in our educational program so that it becomes a national model for **engaged learning**. Students will find Rollins intellectually rewarding and challenging and will develop skills applicable to a range of careers. Our robust academic and co-curricular programs in civic and community engagement, social innovation, and social entrepreneurship will become a **distinctive center of excellence**. Our commitment to providing a comprehensive educational preparation for global citizenship will be elevated and made manifest. We commit to the notion that the critical and creative study of the arts enhances all four pillars of the College’s mission: global citizenship, responsible leadership, meaningful lives, and productive careers. Believing deeply in the educational value of a residential liberal arts experience, **80 percent of our CLA undergraduates will live on campus**.



Rollins earned a prestigious Platinum Seal from The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a national nonpartisan organization that empowers colleges and universities to achieve excellence in student democratic engagement. During the 2018 midterm elections, Rollins boasted a campus voting rate of 50.1 percent, exceeding the national average of 39.1 percent by more than 10 percentage points.



Powered by a transformational \$10 million gift from Trustee Kathleen W. Rollins ’75, the College is bringing together 10 curricular and co-curricular programs at the center of campus and at the heart of the student experience. When it opens this winter, the new Kathleen W. Rollins Hall will be a hive of student engagement and will empower Tars to put their education to work in the world.



Lakeside Neighborhood, a new 250,000-square-foot residential community, is taking shape along the southeastern shore of campus. The Neighborhood’s 124 units will allow more Rollins students to experience our rich residential liberal arts environment and will offer residents more independent living options than ever before.

## Deliver on Our Promise of Student Success

We will commit to the academic and postgraduate success of each of our students. They will choose to attend and persist at Rollins because of their passion for **engaged learning** and will be **mentored in their development at every stage** of their educational careers. Once on campus, they will find an organization that maximizes their **opportunities for success academically and socially**. They will leave confident that their superior skills will lead to fulfilling futures.



This past December, Florida Campus Compact named Rollins the Most Engaged Campus of 2018 for its exemplary commitment to advancing the civic purposes of higher education by improving community life and educating students for social and community responsibility.



Rollins' unique mentorship model provides every student a community of mentors at every step. Every incoming student has a dedicated faculty advisor from orientation to commencement. Their campus-wide mentorship cohort is rounded out by peer mentors—second-, third-, and fourth-year Tars who help incoming students transition to academics and life at college—and a spectrum of staff advisors who guide students through everything from community engagement to career and life planning.



With 23 varsity athletic teams and more than 150 student-run clubs and organizations, Rollins offers students ample avenues to find their anchor. Just ask Greg Taicher '19, a business management and communication studies double major who captained the men's lacrosse team and served as vice president of the Student Government Association. He graduated as the lacrosse program's all-time leader in points, goals, and assists and was named the Sunshine State Conference Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

## Steward Our Strategic Assets to Strengthen Our Competitive Advantage

We will invest in areas essential to our prosperity and competitive advantage: **our people, our workplace culture**, our campus, and our strategic information. Knowing that our talented and dedicated faculty and staff bring our mission to life, we will ensure that compensation is competitive with objectively derived peer benchmark institutions. We will augment the quality and **competitive excellence of our graduate programs in business**. We will further develop our **highly innovative model to provide scholarships for outstanding students** who might not otherwise be able to afford to study at Rollins. We will significantly improve the integrity and integration of our strategic information.



This past September, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* named Rollins a "Great College to Work For" for the 11th consecutive year. Rollins was one of 42 institutions named to the Honor Roll for achieving high marks in multiple categories, including confidence in senior leadership, job satisfaction, professional and career development, and teaching environment.



For the second time in a row, Rollins' Crummer Graduate School of Business was ranked the No. 1 MBA program in Florida in *Forbes'* biennial ranking of the nation's best business schools. Crummer also ranked 51st in the nation in the *Forbes* rankings, which prioritize a student's return on investment five years after graduation.



Since 2013, The Alfond Inn at Rollins has provided more than \$16 million in scholarships to deserving students. All net profits from the award-winning boutique hotel, which was funded in part by a \$12 million grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation, are directed to the Alfond Scholars Program, the College's premier scholarship fund.




# INVESTING IN OPPORTUNITY



**S**upporting Rollins' Center for Career & Life Planning means giving our students access to some of the world's most prestigious internships and the kind of hands-on experience it takes to earn a competitive advantage in the job market. Through the College's newest funded internship program, Rollins Professional Fellows, students like Nina Steigerwald '20 hone through real-world experience the broad-based knowledge and 21st-century skills they're developing in Rollins classrooms. This past summer, the aspiring industrial psychologist put her communication and problem-solving skills to work in the human resources department of one of the nation's largest nonprofit hospital networks.



# A HUMAN-POWERED APPROACH

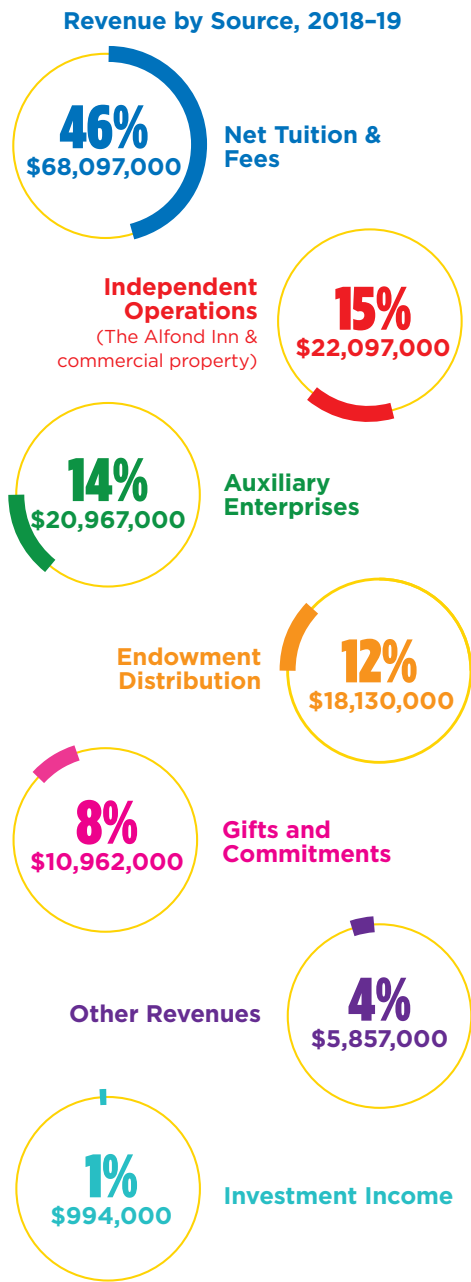


In addition to naming Rollins the No. 1 regional university in the South, *U.S. News & World Report* also ranked the College No. 1 for best undergraduate teaching programs. The rankings focus on schools that have faculty with an unusually strong commitment to teaching undergraduate students. As a result, Rollins besting 119 other colleges in its category should come as little surprise. After all, Rollins is the epicenter of engaged learning. Thanks to our 10:1 student-faculty ratio and average class size of just 17, Rollins students receive individualized attention in and out of the classroom, helping them develop their personal and professional passions and achieve their career and life goals.



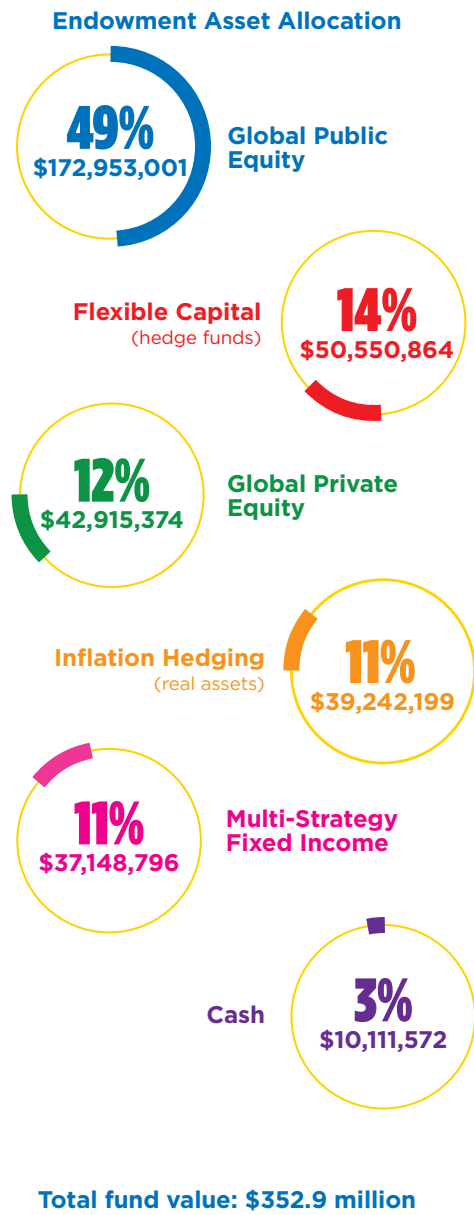
## Sound Financial Footing

Your gifts to Rollins are an important piece of a diversified revenue stream that provides the College with financial stability now and into the future.



## Sustainable Growth

The management objective for the endowment pool is to provide a sustainable and increasing level of distribution to support the College's annual operating budget while preserving the real (inflation-adjusted) purchasing power of the endowment pool exclusive of gift additions.



## Outperforming Targets

The investment objective for the endowment pool is to attain a compound return (net of fees) of at least 7 percent over the long term, as measured over rolling five-year time periods. The College's portfolio returns since January 1997 (from inception of tracked data) of 7.7 percent surpasses the College's weighted policy index of 7 percent and the endowment growth need of 7 percent.

This table summarizes the calculation of compound need:

|                                       |      |
|---------------------------------------|------|
| Spending rate                         | 4.5% |
| Inflation                             | 2%   |
| Real growth                           | 0.5% |
| Compound return need, net of expenses | 7%   |

# INFINITE IMPACT

**Members of the Alumni Association Board of Directors support their alma mater in ways that are as varied as they are impactful. Here's an up-close look at how these six alumni are giving back to Rollins by paying it forward.**

Inspiring your fellow Tars to crush Giving Day goals. Mentoring a student interested in your field. Guiding a future leader by providing an internship at your company. Whether it's time, dollars, or both, there are myriad meaningful ways to give back to the College that both enhance the student experience and invigorate alumni and donors to engage in the Rollins community.

Members of the Rollins Alumni Association Board of Directors—an advisory board that promotes the welfare of Rollins and facilitates the exchange of ideas between members of the campus community and alumni—represent the many ways to connect with and invest in your alma mater.

Just ask Kirk Nalley '93 '01MBA, who's helped Elijah Noel '20 understand the importance of relationships in business. Or Amir Ladan '94, who just hired Diego Orbegoso '20 for a full-time position at his law firm. Or John Henry '88 '90MBA P'18, whose conversation with Josh McCoy '05 at Alumni Fox Day inspired him to become a part of the College's new Career Champions mentorship program.

Whether it's mentoring a student or making a gift, you're supporting the College's promise to educate students for global citizenship and responsible leadership. These six Alumni Board members prove there's more than one way to give back and more than one way to make a difference.

## **CAREER CHAMPION** **Kirk Nalley '93 '01MBA**

Through Rollins' new Career Champions mentorship program, Kirk Nalley '93 '01MBA and Elijah Noel '20 discovered a shared passion for business and developed a rapport that's paying dividends on both sides. Noel, an international business major, aspires to attend Rollins' Crummer Graduate School of Business like his mentor, Nalley, vice president of sales at Fairchild Resiliency Systems. Nalley has become not only a role model to Noel, but a friend who emphasizes the importance of kindness and the power of relationships as one embarks on their career. "Rollins students can benefit from Rollins graduates giving their time and sharing their personal and career resources," says Nalley. "Much like learning the discipline of saving money, building a reliable network can't happen early enough in life, and the network will experience compounded growth over time."

**GET INVOLVED:** To become a Career Champion, submit a Volunteer Interest Form at [rollins.edu/alumni](https://rollins.edu/alumni).







### GIVING DAY AMBASSADOR

#### Morgen Chaderton '15

It's only fitting that Morgen Chaderton '15—a vocal champion of Rollins in our backyard and around the world—became the Alumni Board ambassador for the College's 2019 Giving Day. The Hamilton Holt School grad served as Rollins' first Giving Day Ambassador this past February, recruiting board members to get involved and taking to social media to share promotions, news, and day-of live updates. The College exceeded its Giving Day goals and is looking forward to doing the same in 2020. "Watching the number grow throughout the day and knowing how many lives will be changed for the better makes you brim with all the good feels," says Chaderton. "This is part of what it means to be a responsible leader and give back, and what better way to do that than help the College achieve its goals."

**GET INVOLVED:** Save the date for Giving Day 2020 on February 20. Help make Rollins history by serving as a Giving Day Ambassador through the Office of Annual Giving at [rollins.college/givingambassador](http://rollins.college/givingambassador).

### SERIAL GIVER

#### Eric Marshall '91 P'20 P'22

When Alumni Board co-president Eric Marshall '91 P'20 P'22 gives financially to the College's areas of greatest need, he does so with the next generation of global citizens and responsible leaders in mind, which now includes his two daughters, Grace '20 and Emily '22. Senior vice president of sales at Universal Orlando Resort, Marshall splits his annual online gifts into two—one that he gives during the regular campaign and one on Giving Day. "With the needs of the College and its students changing all of the time, I trust Rollins to make the best use of the funds," says Marshall. "My Rollins experience prepared me for my career and gave me an amazing group of friends. I want the school to always be able to fulfill its mission of preparing students for global leadership."

**GET INVOLVED:** Make a gift today, and learn how to set up a recurring gift, at [rollins.edu/give](http://rollins.edu/give).

### SPEAKER AND PANELIST

#### Mai-Han Harrington '10 '15MBA

As a local alumna, Mai-Han Harrington '10 '15MBA, co-vice president of the Alumni Board, speaks on alumni panels throughout the year, providing career advice to students eager to make the most of their Rollins education. Harrington—who finds speaking to first-year students especially fulfilling—loves coming back to campus, explaining how it always reminds her how far she's come and sparks an interest in giving back. "I really enjoy speaking about ways to apply the liberal arts to the real world because making that connection is crucial to understanding the value of what you are studying."

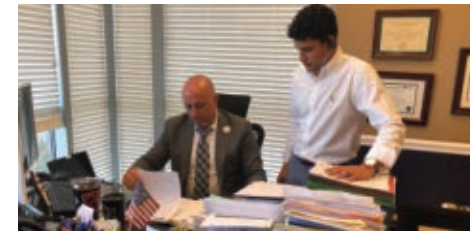
**GET INVOLVED:** To speak on a future alumni panel, contact the Office of Alumni Engagement at [alumni@rollins.edu](mailto:alumni@rollins.edu).

### FOX DAY HOST

#### John Henry '88 '90MBA P'18

You don't have to be on campus to celebrate Fox Day. From barbecues to beach days, alumni host their own Fox Days throughout the country and work with the Office of Alumni Engagement to plan the events. This past year, John Henry '88 '90MBA P'18 hosted Alumni Fox Day in Dallas, bringing together 20 alums spanning five decades for a fun-filled evening at a Dallas Mavericks basketball game. At the event, Henry connected with Josh McCoy '05, who decided to participate in Rollins' new Career Champions mentorship program because of their conversation. "I told Josh how rewarding the experience had been, and he was immediately interested in getting involved," says Henry. "Josh is also in the business management field and offered to reach out to my mentee to offer additional guidance and opportunities."

**GET INVOLVED:** Submit a Volunteer Interest Form to host an Alumni Fox Day by visiting [rollins.edu/alumni](http://rollins.edu/alumni).



### CAREER ADVISOR

#### Amir Ladan '94

When Amir Ladan '94, co-president of the Alumni Board, provides internships to Rollins students at his law practice, The Ladan Law Firm, he gets as much as he gives. "Rollins students are excellent interns because they're so actively engaged in their roles," says Ladan. "They possess the critical-thinking and analytical skills necessary to tackle a task and work toward a practical solution." Ladan just hired his former intern, psychology major Diego Orbegoso '20, as the firm's administrative assistant, whom he describes as an invaluable asset to the team. "Our time is our most precious resource, so giving back through mentoring an intern is incredibly meaningful in that it demonstrates a commitment to Rollins through the growth, development, and success of its students."

**GET INVOLVED:** Contact the Office of Career & Life Planning at [rollins.edu/career-life-planning](http://rollins.edu/career-life-planning) to learn more about hiring Rollins students for internships.

# MAKE YOUR MARK



Learn more about how you can give back to your alma mater at [rollins.edu/alumni](http://rollins.edu/alumni).



# Return & Rewind

ALUMNI WEEKEND 2020

*Save the date*

MARCH 27 - 29, 2020





# JOIN US FOR ALUMNI WEEKEND

This spring, grads from the College of Liberal Arts, Crummer Graduate School of Business, and the Hamilton Holt School will be kickin' it old school for the first-ever joint celebration of their time at Rollins.

**So cue the tape deck and mark your PalmPilot for what will surely be a bangin' weekend of revelry and reminiscing.**



## Class Reunions

|      |      |      |      |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1950 | 1970 | 1990 | 2010 |
| 1955 | 1975 | 1995 | 2015 |
| 1960 | 1980 | 2000 | 2019 |
| 1965 | 1985 | 2005 |      |

## Affinity Reunions

Men's Tennis, Student Media (*The Sandspur*, *WPRK*, *Brushing*, *The Independent*), Non Compis Mentis, and Chi Psi







**'77 David Hodges '77's (1)** book, *Paths to the Divine: An Introduction to World Religions*, was published this past summer. The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation, a statewide nonprofit dedicated to protecting Florida's heritage and history, recently honored **Will Graves '77 '78MBA (2)** with its 2019 Individual Distinguished Service Award. Graves is CEO of Millennial Workforce Institute and a national community activist lecturing on management, marketing, preservation, philanthropic, and employment issues.

**'83 Jane Stoner Humphrey '83 (3)** married Joseph G. Doonan on 6/8/19. Guests included **Joanne Rapchuck Schwartz '83** and **Cindi Cross '83**.

**'85 Robert Boyd '85 (4)** was recently named president and CEO of The Independent Colleges & Universities of Florida (ICUF), where he has served as general counsel since 1995. As part of his long-standing legal practice in Florida, Boyd represented charter schools throughout the state and was the charter school attorney for one of Florida's first six charter schools approved by the Florida Legislature. He served as the attorney in the first-

ever successful charter school appeal before the Florida Cabinet in 1999.

**'86 Parker Roy '86 and Scott duPont '87 (5)** recently produced *Movie Money Confidential*, a documentary that investigates the secrets of Hollywood and independent film financing.

**'91 Bart Potter '91**, founder of Colorado-based wellness company, Jiffy Body, published a new book, *Jiffy Body: The 10-Minute System to Avoid Joint and Muscle Pain*, which is available on Amazon.

**'93** This past summer, **Lee Kellogg Sadrian '93 (6)** competed in the Devon Horse Show, the largest and oldest multi-breed horse show in the U.S. Sadrian's horse was Reserve Champion in the Green Confirmation Hunter with her trainer riding, and Sadrian and her horse were also Reserve Champion in the Amateur Owner Hunters.

**'98** This past summer, **Emilia Odife '98** studied desert and marine landscapes through ecological and social field methods in Baja. Odife, a teacher and program



advisor at Gulliver Preparatory School, lives in Cutler Bay, Florida, and is a graduate student in Miami University's Global Field Program. In 2017, she was selected as a Grosvenor Teacher Fellow and is currently a member of the National Geographic Teacher Advisory Council.

**'01 Vanessa Blakeslee '01's (7)** most recent book, *Perfect Conditions*, won the Foreword Reviews' 2018 INDIEFAB Book of the Year Gold for Short Stories, a National Indie Excellence Award, and the IPPY Silver Medal, among other accolades. In 2019, she joined the board of directors for the Jack Kerouac Writers-in-Residence Project of Orlando.

**'02 Olivia Haine Demarco '02 '15MBA (8)** recently joined the team at the historic Orlando Repertory Theatre, Florida's only professional family theater, as marketing director. Demarco is also a performer throughout Central Florida, most recently appearing in *Billy Elliot* at Garden Theatre, and is looking forward to choreographing *The Sound of Music* at Ice House Theatre this fall.

**'03 Tonia King '03 '05MACCT (9)** was recently promoted to vice president, account manager at ROI Communication.

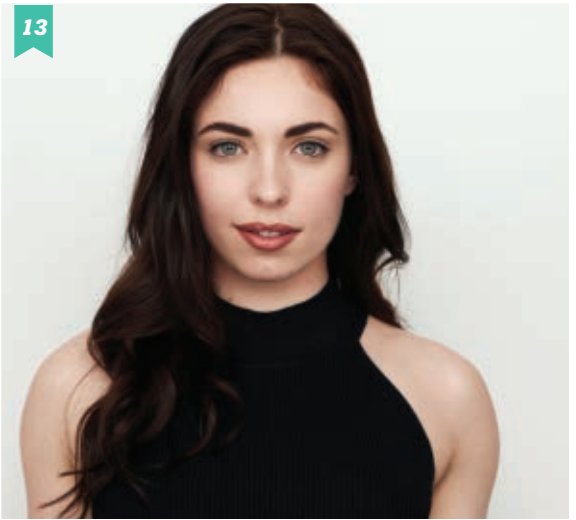
**'05 Chris Winkelman '05**, former general counsel for the National Republican Congressional Committee, has been named partner at the leading law firm of Holtzman Vogel Josefiak Torchinsky, PLLC in Washington, D.C. The prestigious practice focuses on providing strategic counsel and compliance advice to those engaged in political and policy matters, serving a range of clients from officeholders and candidates to nonprofits, party committees, and trade associations.

**'07 Homer Marshman '07 '11MBA** married Elizabeth Higginbotham on 5/31/19 in Palm Beach, Florida.

**'11 Andrea Schaumann '11 '17MBA (10)**, associate director of admission for Rollins' Hamilton Holt School, received the University Professional and Continuing Education Association's South Region Outstanding Service to Education award for the second consecutive year.

**'13 Wendy (Erskine) Schafer '13 '14MBA** married **John Schafer '13 (11)** on 1/26/19 in Winter Park. The ceremony was held at All Saints Episcopal, and the reception took place at the Albin Polasek Museum, with more than 20 Rollins alumni in attendance. Wendy, John, and their goldendoodle, Heidi, reside in Atlanta, where Wendy works





on Moe's Southwest Grill's marketing team, and John is a member of RaceTrac's real estate team. Both are active members of the Rollins Club of Atlanta, and Wendy is a member of the Alumni Board. **Alexa Gordon '13** and **Travis Ray '11 '13MPCU (12)** welcomed their first child, Calvin Russell Ray, on 4/12/19.

**'15 Isabella Ward '15 (13)** was recently cast in Steven Spielberg's remake of the classic film, *West Side Story*. The film is slated for release in December 2020.

**'16 Lauren Cooper '16** recently received an offer to join the legislative office of state Rep. Anna Eskamani

as a district secretary and constituent relations officer in the Florida House of Representatives. Cooper previously worked at RVR Consulting Group as a sales coordinator, but after a successful stint creating digital content for Eskamani's 2018 campaign, she was asked to join the office full-time. Cooper has also co-authored a study published by IGI Global with communication professor Hesham Mesbah that analyzes content from social media communities of African diasporans compared to that of their respective U.S. embassies. The study seeks to expose the disconnect between the two groups and ensure that government agencies uphold their primary role of serving as a home base for immigrants abroad.

## In Memory

**JOHN L. LIBERMAN '42**  
April 29, 2019

**BEVERLY BURKHART OGILVIE '49**  
May 4, 2019

**GERALD L. HONAKER '49**  
July 28, 2019

**ROBERT D. SETZER '49**  
April 3, 2019

**CONSTANCE HUBBARD ROSE '50**  
May 20, 2019

**HERBERT P. LEFEVRE '50**  
June 2, 2019

**LIANE SEIM PUTNAM '52**  
June 28, 2019

**MARYANN COLADO PAGE '57**  
June 21, 2019

**LINDA C. CROW '60**  
July 3, 2019

**ROBERT G. COLE SR. '64**  
July 13, 2019

**JOHN C. DELL '64**  
May 27, 2019

**HAZEL CAMPBELL SHIELL '67MAT**  
March 29, 2019

**MATTHEW M. DRASKOVICH '68**  
April 7, 2019

**ROBERT D. MARSHALL '73**  
May 10, 2019

**HUGH H. DEARING II '75**  
July 24, 2019

**JOHN F. HALL '75 '75MBA**  
July 4, 2019

**WAYNE A. SORRELL '77 '79MSCJ P'94 P'08MBA**  
June 3, 2019

**PATRICIA L. BALDAUFF '78MAT**  
May 18, 2019

**DONNA M. HOSTNICK WHELCHER '82**  
May 1, 2019

**AVERY NICKERSON JOHNSON '84**  
July 24, 2019

**PAUL J. BUTLER '85**  
March 7, 2019

**MARCELLE HOUTR POUR '86**  
July 13, 2019

**RENEE L. ROBITAILLE UNELL '97**  
July 26, 2019

**TYLER R. JUSTICE '11**  
May 16, 2019

## HAVE NEWS TO SHARE?


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A smiling man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a white lab coat over a blue button-down shirt. He is wearing blue nitrile gloves and holding a green and white marker in his right hand. In his left hand, he holds a yellow microplate with several test tubes. The background is a blurred laboratory setting with a whiteboard and other lab equipment.

“  
**Your generosity has enabled me to pursue my passion for music and science and has instilled in me a belief that I can accomplish great things. Thank you for supporting The Rollins Annual Fund.**

— *Brandon McNichol '19*  
”

Biochemistry/molecular biology and music double major Brandon McNichol '19 believes music is more than notes on a page and medicine is more than science. Through his experience in both the Pre-Med Observership Program and as a cellist in the Rollins orchestra, the Presidential Scholar discovered how the emotions he connects to through music are essential in the art of practicing medicine—an endeavor he's undertaking now as a med student at Northwestern University.

**Turn to page 36 to see how your gifts are making a difference at Rollins, in our community, and in the lives of our students.**

# What I've Learned: Cheryl Henry '04MBA

The new president and CEO of Ruth's Hospitality Group—owner of Ruth's Chris Steak House—believes food is the key ingredient in connecting friends and family.

The next time you bite into a succulent, signature filet at Ruth's Chris Steak House, raise a toast to the Tar who supervises "the sizzle."

In June 2018, Cheryl Henry '04MBA was named president and CEO of Ruth's Hospitality Group, replacing mentor and fellow Rollins grad Michael O'Donnell '78, who groomed her for the position and now serves as the company's executive chairman.

During her 12-plus years at Ruth's Chris, Henry has held a range of leadership positions—COO, CMO, and chief business development officer—and played a role in virtually every operational aspect of the company. Prior to that, she was chief of staff for the mayor of Orlando.

Henry is continually inspired and guided by the hard work and moxie of Ruth Fertel, who founded Ruth's Chris Steak House at a time when it was uncommon to find a woman at the helm of a restaurant.

We recently caught up with Henry—who oversees operations for 157 restaurants worldwide—to talk about the lessons she learned at Rollins and how a degree from the Crummer Graduate School of Business built a foundation for success in the fine-dining industry.

**Crummer was a great option for me personally** because it provided the flexibility I needed to continue to do my job while pursuing advanced education.

**The curriculum placed an emphasis** on areas like finance, which I found especially helpful. Additionally, the increased exposure to many aspects of business, together with an emphasis on group projects, has helped me throughout my career.

**I was particularly influenced by the *Introduction to Six Sigma* course.** Its techniques and tools for process improvement have proven to be hugely helpful in our ongoing pursuit of excellence in both product quality and customer service.

**The professors at Crummer are some of the brightest minds in business.** [Marketing and strategy professor] Greg Marshall is a brilliant brand strategist, and I always enjoyed working with him—so much so that I hired him to consult with Ruth's Hospitality Group.

**What I discovered during my time at Rollins** was the common thread of a constant thirst for knowledge and pursuit of success among students.

**Whenever I found that I needed a moment of solitude,** the Knowles Chapel provided a respite. The chapel is also where I had my daughter Liv baptized, so it will always be a special place for me.

**Growing up in an Italian-American family** essentially guarantees an appreciation for food. My grandmother, Vita Antoinette Saveria Popuolo, was born in Italy and was a passionate cook. She instilled in me my appreciation for food and drove the importance of food as a connector of family and friends.

**My role at Ruth's** is one that has allowed me to deepen that appreciation because at Ruth's we're in the business of making memories, of bringing friends and loved ones together in a warm, welcoming environment that feels and treats you like family.

**In the future, I believe the role of restaurants will become even more important** as they serve as places for people to meaningfully connect—like Rollins students and alumni. Rollins has an amazing alumni network, and I would recommend any incoming student to take advantage of this invaluable resource.

**Michael O'Donnell '78 paved the way for our long-term success** by codifying the mission and values that our founder, Ruth Fertel, set forth. We have a document that outlines these concepts called The Sizzle, which unites our organization and helps inspire us. Mike understood the importance of a relentless focus on operational excellence in order to deliver the best steakhouse experience for our guests.







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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



## ***A Legacy of Love***

When Mister Rogers hung up his final sweater on the last episode of his enduring TV show, it became incumbent on all who learned from him to carry forward his lessons of kindness, responsibility, and community. Perhaps nowhere is this more palpable than on the campus where he started discovering his purpose. The same approach to education that resonated with Fred Rogers '51 '74H—one fueled by relationships and steeped in service—is molding the next generation of changemakers here at Rollins. Learn more about the many ways we're living out the values and ideals of our most beloved alumnus at [rollins.college/mister-rogers](https://rollins.college/mister-rogers).